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**Goethe**, by Calvin Thomas. New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1917. 368 pp. \$2.

In this companion volume to his Schiller Professor Thomas has performed a distinct service for students of German literature as well as for those of literature in general. If Goethe even approaches the literary importance accorded him by Matthew Arnold, when he calls him "the clearest, largest, and most helpful thinker of modern times," then just such a thoughtful and sympathetic analysis of his work and character will be welcomed by intelligent readers.

The varying views of Goethe's works are interpreted here as a unified whole. Professor Thomas is fitted for this task. That during forty years of university teaching, Goethe has not long been out of his thoughts is clear for other reasons than because he says so. His editions of various works of Goethe prove it. Almost every page of this study shows such intimate knowledge of the subject in hand that one might almost regard it—as Goethe did his own works—as "fragments of a great confession." And indeed it is a "confession," for Professor Thomas makes clear in his preface that he has "relaxed the reins" of his ego to present *his* Goethe and no one else's.

The first part of the book is biographical in nature. It steers between Scylla and Charybdis—between the "jejuneness of a mere sketch and the cloying plenitude of details." The exhaustive biography of Goethe was written when Bielschowsky finished his work in 1902 and Thomas has not tried to add anything about the external facts of Goethe's life as recorded therein. The second part of the book is by far the more valuable. In a series of notable essays Goethe is here considered as philosopher, evolutionist, believer, poet, dramatist, novelist and critic; with a concluding chapter on Faust. These chapters show Goethe as a towering personality; Bielschowsky minimized his personality. Here Goethe is represented as a well developed genius foremost in many of the important movements of his day. Thomas disagrees with Bielschowsky too in his estimate of Goethe's work. The latter eulogized everything that came from Goethe's pen; Thomas, on the other hand, in the judgment of ardent admirers of Goethe, will seem to minimize the importance of much of his work, both in science and literature. He can not believe that "Goethe's work in any scientific field whatever, notably affected the course of subsequent investigation." To him it seems that Goethe's evolutionism "made little difference in the history of the science" although it made a great difference in the development of Goethe's own thought. With this conclusion the best scientific judgment of modern times seems to agree since Goethe's whole mode of thinking was unfitted to the "cut and dry" method so essential to the experimental scientist. The chapters on Goethe as poet and as dramatist contain many trenchant criticisms of his work in these fields. They leave one with the feeling that Goethe's work, except in lyric poems and in Faust, has been overestimated. Goethe's literary work deserves greater praise than this.

Professor Thomas' style of writing is worthy of note; he makes use of a wide vocabulary—at times to such an extent that the effect seems studied.

Cf. to glad the paternal heart, p. 26; ozonizing the stagnant air, p. 46; we glimpse the more ideal aspect, p. 76; avatar, p. 76; yclept, p. 76; amatory agitations of adolescence, p. 146; bulbul, p. 156; urge (noun), p. 173; manifold (noun), p. 182; subsumed, p. 185; sacerdotal bolus, p. 231; familiar (noun), p. 331; revenant (adj.), p. 341; etc. On the use of the rare word "fictionist" p. 281, Thomas himself comments.

The date 1880 (p. 308) for the passage quoted from "Wilhelm Meister" is, of course, a typographical slip for 1780.

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**A Handbook of French Phonetics** by William A. Nitze and Ernest H. Wilkins, University of Chicago. With exercises by Clarence E. Parmenter, University of Chicago. New York, Henry Holt & Company, 1918. viii + 106 pp. 40 cents.

Professors Nitze and Wilkins have made a valuable addition to American manuals. Their new *Handbook of French Phonetics* exhibits an unusual combination of pedagogical skill with accurate scholarship. Compact and comprehensive, it contains in admirably organized form material hitherto widely scattered. It is consequently adapted for use as a text-book in college courses in phonetics, and likewise as an auxiliary in elementary classes.

These purposes are subserved by a broad and well-arranged plan. The analytic side of phonetics, the study of individual sounds, is first taken up. Here we have a brief discussion of the speech-organs and their operation, preceding a detailed discussion of French vowels and consonants. Then follows an account of the letters and signs representing these sounds. A brief discussion of foreign words and proper names concludes this part of the book. "Synthesis," treating of sounds in combination, is then taken up. It includes syllabication, stress, vowel quantity, liaison, assimilation, elision, pitch, and intonation. A brief, but judicious bibliography,\* exercises on individual sounds, some phonetically transcribed texts, and a few readings in conventional orthography complete the book.

As the outline just given indicates, the authors have wisely followed Nyrop in separating the treatment of sounds from that of letters. They have improved upon his plan by making these two sections of the book consecutive. Another matter of pedagogical importance, likewise to be noted in Nyrop, is the elimination of intermediate vowel qualities. These qualities, which are difficult for any but very delicate ears to perceive, merely baffle an elementary student.

The practical tendencies thus exhibited appear still more clearly in the exercises. They are carefully and intelligently prepared to illustrate the rules set forth. The preliminary exercises, involving the use of mirrors, are excellent. In what follows one might desire less than ten pages of isolated words in ordinary spelling, and more than ten pages of connected texts in

\*Grammont's *Petit traité de prononciation française* (Paris, Delagrave, 1916?), doubtless reached the authors too late to be included.